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## ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

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**Relating to:** the life and service of Eugene M. Roark.

Whereas, Eugene M. Roark was born on March 25, 1931, in Madison, Wisconsin and died on October 24, 2015, in Madison, Wisconsin at the age of 84; and

Whereas, Gene Roark said, “We’re dependent on the environment. If we don’t take care of it, it won’t be there for us or for our children and grandchildren,” and dedicated his life to that pursuit; and

Whereas, Gene Roark graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and, in 1960, started working for the Information and Tourism Department in the Wisconsin Conservation Department; and

Whereas, Gene Roark was the Director of Tourism for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources from 1970 to 1975; and

Whereas, Gene Roark was one of the founding members of the Wisconsin Chapter of The Nature Conservancy in 1960 and has served the conservancy as a board member, board chairman, and active emeritus trustee; and

Whereas, Gene Roark and his fellow trustees launched some of what would become the conservancy’s most important projects in Wisconsin in the Baraboo Hills, Chiwaukee Prairie, Door County, and northern Wisconsin; and

Whereas, Gene Roark has been an active and influential member of many conservation organizations including the Madison Audubon Society, which he joined as a teenager, the Natural Heritage Land Trust, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Dane County Conservation League, Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, The Prairie Enthusiasts, Gathering Waters Conservancy, and the Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin; and

Whereas, Gene Roark was inducted as a member of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in 2015 after serving on the board of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame since 1990; and

Whereas, Gene Roark led by example by placing a conservation easement on 21 acres of land he, along with siblings Nancy and William, owned along Lake Wisconsin in Columbia County in 2004 to protect the land and approximately 3,500 feet of shoreline from development, which is one of the largest undisturbed acreages on Lake Wisconsin; and

Whereas, Gene Roark and his wife purchased 120 acres of old farmland and woods in northern Richland County with the goal of increasing diversity on the property, planted thousands of trees and maintained the property through timber sales and regular deer hunting by family and friends, and planted prairie grasses and native wildflowers in open areas to recreate presettlement plant communities, while ensuring that the largest and most valuable trees remain; and

Whereas, Gene Roark has dedicated his life and public service to the land and its resources; Wisconsin’s natural landscape would look vastly different without Gene’s foresight, persistence, and leadership; and

Whereas, Gene will be especially missed by his wife of 62 years, Jean, sons David and Michael Roark, daughter-in-law Sally, grandchildren Rachael, Taylor, John, and Michael Andrew Roark, great-grandchildren Ilan and Emilia Roark, sister Nancy Roark, and brother William Roark; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That** the members of the Wisconsin legislature commend the life and public service of Eugene M. Roark, mourn his passing, and extend their condolences to his family and friends; and, be it further

**Resolved, That** the senate chief clerk shall provide a copy of this joint resolution to Eugene M. Roark’s wife, Jean, and their family.

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Representative Robin J. Vos  
Speaker of the Assembly

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Senator Mary Lazich  
President of the Senate

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Date

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Jeffrey Renk  
Senate Chief Clerk